



Office of the City Manager

CONSENT CALENDAR  
June 27, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council  
 From: Dee Williams-Ridley, City Manager  
 Submitted by: David Sprague, Fire Chief  
 Subject: Contract: US Digital Designs for Fire Station Emergency Alerting System

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution authorizing the City Manager to execute a piggyback contract and any amendments with US Digital Designs using the National Purchasing Partners (NPP) contract No. 2020 in an amount not to exceed \$1,600,000 for the purchase, installation and maintenance of a Fire Station Emergency Alerting System from July 12, 2023 through June 2, 2026.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

The purchase price of Fire Station Emergency Alerting System, installation and maintenance will not exceed \$1,600,000. This total includes state and local sales taxes. Funding will be recommended for appropriation through the first amendment to the FY 2024 Annual Appropriations Ordinance using funds from Measure GG and Measure FF.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The ability for dispatchers to promptly alert responders to a call for help is critical to the very core of the Fire Departments mission: to provide prompt response and render aid to the community. Delays in this critical lifeline of a 9-1-1 response system has direct negative impacts to patient outcome during medical emergencies, structural damage from fire, the chances of being successful in search and rescue, and responder safety.

This purchase is necessary to replace the currently obsolete, failing, and unsupported fire emergency alerting system. The new alerting system will ensure that when a customer calls 9-1-1 that the dispatcher is able to reliably alert the appropriate fire station to begin their response to an incident.

Over the past five (5) years the current system has required an increasing amount of maintenance, which became more problematic through the pandemic as replacement parts were difficult to obtain. Recently the Department was notified that the vendor Comtech, went out of business – leaving the Department with no mechanism to obtain support or have emergency repairs completed. This was the catalyst to begin emergency procurement.

Following several months of research, the Department has learned that most Fire Departments in Alameda County have contracted with US Digital Designs to install and maintain new Fire Station Emergency Alerting systems. This fact provides redundancy to Berkeley in that the Alameda County Regional Communications System could more easily serve as a backup dispatching center to Berkeley's fire stations in the event that Berkeley's dispatch center is temporarily unable to provide dispatching service. This redundancy is not just best practice but is specifically recommended as a priority project in the Dispatch Needs Assessment recently completed by Federal Engineering for the City of Berkeley. US Digital Designs has a competitively bid contract through National Purchasing Partners (NPP) which covers all the parts and installation for these systems. The Department has done due diligence in researching the system, checking references, and conducting multiple detailed on-site walk throughs and subsequent design meetings with US Digital Design representatives.

The US Digital Design system also meets or exceeds all applicable National Fire Protection Association standards.

### BACKGROUND

On March 10, 2009 the City Council approved Resolution No. 64,365-N.S. to enter into a contract with Comtech Communications for a Fire Station Alerting System. This system was installed in the dispatch center and all seven fire stations and operated somewhat reliably for almost ten (10) years. Over the past five (5) years the performance of the system has deteriorated and it now frequently malfunctions which causes delays in the dispatch of responders, or responders completely missing a notification to respond to an emergency incident.

On January 6, 2020 the League of Oregon Cities on behalf of the National Purchasing Partners "NPP" and its Government Division dba NPPGov issued RFP No. 2020 for the procurement of "Public Safety Software Solutions, Data Collection, Storage and Utilization". The RFP was published in the Daily Journal of Commerce and USA Today on January 9th, 2020. The RFP closed March 9, 2020 and contracts were awarded on April 27, 2020. The contract with US Digital started on June 2, 2020 and ends on June 2, 2026. This is a publicly solicited contract established through an RFP process conducted by a Lead Public Agency and satisfies Berkeley's formal competitive bid requirements.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE IMPACTS

There are no identifiable environmental effects associated with the subject of this report.

### RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The ability for dispatchers to promptly alert responders to a call for help is critical to the very core of the Fire Departments mission: to provide prompt response and render aid to the community. The current Fire Station Alerting System is failing, no longer supported and causes delays in notification of responders that may cause negative

impacts to patient outcome during medical emergencies, structural damage from fire, the chances of being successful in search and rescue and responder safety.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

Conduct a City of Berkeley procurement process. This option would take months during which time the core of the City's failing Fire Station Emergency Alerting System would be left in a vulnerable state without qualified external vendor support.

CONTACT PERSON

David Sprague, Fire Chief, (510) 981-3473

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

CONTRACT: US DIGITAL FOR FIRE STATION EMERGENCY ALERTING SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the ability for dispatchers to promptly alert responders to a call for help is critical to the very core of the Fire Departments mission: to provide prompt response and render aid to the community. Delays in this critical point of a 9-1-1 response has direct negative impacts to patient outcome during medical emergencies, structural damage from fire, the chances of being successful in search and rescue and responder safety, and

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WHEREAS, following several months of research, the Department has learned that most Fire Departments in Alameda County have contracted with US Digital Designs to install and maintain new Fire Station Emergency Alerting systems. This fact provides redundancy in that the Alameda County Regional Communications System could more easily serve as a backup dispatching center in the event that Berkeley's dispatch center is temporarily unable to provide dispatching service. US Digital Designs has a competitively bid contract through National Purchasing Partners (NPP) which covers all the parts and installation for these systems. The Department has done due diligence in researching the system, checking references, and conducting multiple detailed on-site walk throughs and subsequent design meetings with vendor representatives, and

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract and any amendments with US Digital Designs using the National Purchasing Partners (NPP) contract No. 2020 in an amount not to exceed \$1,600,000 for the purchase, installation and maintenance of a Fire Station Emergency Alerting System from July 12, 2023 through June 2, 2026.

